

Missouri Conservation Forums Autumn 2003

A Summary of Citizen Input



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Executive Summary

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) sponsored a series of eight Conservation forums in the fall of 2003, complementing eight spring forums reported previously. Their purpose was to seek citizen input regarding Department programs and activities. This report summarizes the content of the eight fall forums, which had a total public sign in of 228 participants.

The Department is committed to its mission:

- To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state.
- To serve the public and facilitate its participation in resource management activities.
- To provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources.

The Department's commitment to listening to constituents who are involved in conservation continues. When John Hoskins became director of the Department on July 1, 2002, he immediately placed strong emphasis on listening to the public in setting conservation goals and work priorities.

Director Hoskins personally attended seven of the eight fall forums in 2003, and was represented by Deputy Director John Smith at the other one. Each of the Department's division administrators attended some of the forums. In many cases, questions were answered and issues addressed on the spot by these top level leaders of the Department.

The Department of Conservation has eight administrative regions, summarized on the map on the next page. Each region has a Regional Coordination Team of supervisors for major department programs. These teams planned and organized the forums to meet regional needs, making each forum format slightly different. In each case, however, letters were sent to groups which have in the past been involved with conservation, sometimes supporting and sometimes criticizing Department policies. Groups were asked to send at least one representative to express and clarify issues and concerns.

This report is organized into two major sections. The Common Threads section covers topics that surfaced in several regions or have statewide application. These topics include Deer Management; Land Acquisition; Quail/Small Game Management; Forests, Trees and Fire Management; Outreach and Education; Seasons, Permits and Regulations; Trapping, Nuisance Wildlife and Otters; Horse Use on MDC Areas; Legislative Issues; and Gravel and Stream Management. The second major section is entitled Region Specific Input and focuses on topics that were regional in scope, or did not fit with one of the topical headings.

Map

Missouri Department of Conservation Regions



Director Hoskins Message

Director Hoskins presented brief remarks to welcome participants in each region and explained the Department's general direction, priorities and financial situation. Following is the core message presented in all regions.

Introductory Remarks:

Missouri conservation is unique - unique in its history, unique in the way in which the Conservation Commission derives its authority from the people, unique in its funding, and unique in the passion and commitment that is exhibited every day by those who work for the Department of Conservation. Conservation has inherited a great legacy in Missouri because it was created by and for its people.

President Theodore Roosevelt challenged each of us to value our conservation legacy when he said, "Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people who are alive today, but the property of unborn generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander."

Tonight we want to explore the uniqueness of Missouri conservation and discuss how our mutual responsibility to preserve this legacy can be best achieved.

We are in an era of tight budgets and daunting challenges. All demands must be balanced to ensure nature's balance is maintained and that our communities remain healthy, vibrant and strong.

Priorities identified for the Missouri Department of Conservation to accomplish are:

- appropriate population levels for native species of animals, fish, plants and birds;
- limitations on the negative impacts of invasive species to our lands and waterways;
- enhanced public service delivered to Missouri's citizens both on public and private lands;
- restoration of habitat on the rural landscape and preservation of open space near our urban areas;
- renewed commitment to integrating conservation education in our schools; and
- wherever possible, redirection of funds from administrative overhead to on-the-ground field activities.

Department leaders here tonight are tasked with developing strategies to accomplish these objectives, but there are many more important areas of concern to address. I look forward to talking about issues that concern you and listening to how the Department can meet your needs.

Closing remarks:

It has been a pleasure to spend this time with you and learn more about how we can work together to preserve Missouri's unique legacy of conservation. It is clear that you share the Department's concern for the future and desire to protect our natural resources.

Twenty-five years ago, three commitments were made to Missouri's citizens and the Missouri Legislature:

- Give the Conservation Commission 1/8 of one percent sales tax and we will provide conservation services and programs that are the envy of the nation.
- Give the Commission dedicated funding and we won't ask for general revenue as we serve every county and maintain the necessary infrastructure to support those services.
- Give the Commission the funding to make fish and wildlife abundant, forests sustainable and our waters healthy and the Department will live within its means.

Conservation is about clean water, healthy plant communities and a balanced, sustainable ecosystem. MDC is supporting these passions in numerous ways, albeit quietly. We are preserving the fish, forests and wildlife around Missouri and striving to bring it back into places where it no longer exists.

We also need to learn from our successes. Deer, otters and geese are all species that once were scarce on our landscape, but now their strong numbers are creating new challenges in many parts of the state. Efforts currently underway to manage these populations signal a renewed commitment to balancing the needs of all forms of wildlife and the citizens that enjoy them.

It is in our mutual interest because conservation is big business in Missouri. Recent economic impact studies tell us that expenditures related to fish, wildlife and forestry generate more than \$7 billion for Missouri's economy every year—a \$4 billion impact from fish and wildlife-related expenditures and another \$3 billion from forest-related economics. This is the return on investment from the state agency that receives less than 1% of the total state budget!

Perhaps more important is the intrinsic, personal value we place on the importance of natural resources to our quality of life. These values are in our hearts and are impossible to measure.

We are managing the Department in a very conservative fashion today. During my first year in office, we reorganized the Department and flattened administration. We cut \$7 million in spending over two fiscal years and committed to reducing staff by 50 positions. We are conducting program reviews and identifying changes to major programs, including deer population management, habitat management on Department land, and the bobwhite quail initiative.

Our objective is to manage our funding today in such a way that the Conservation Commission will have the flexibility, in the future, to make decisions, launch new initiatives, or expand valuable programs and services when the economic times improve, for all of us.

We remain dedicated to keeping promises that have already been made to communities and to conservation partners across the state. I sincerely believe that we have done a good job, but we also know that we can improve. Forums like this one will help and I want to personally thank you for the time you shared this evening.

Common Threads: Issues at several forums

The following section documents citizen input on 10 topics. When a comment is placed in one of these sections, it is no longer included in the Region Specific Input section. The intent of this section is to collect issues of broad interest which are likely to be resolved on a statewide basis. Comments recorded are not direct quotes, rather an abbreviated summary of what a reporter understood.

The region originating each comment is noted in parentheses at the end of the comment, with the following abbreviations:

CE = Central Region
KC = Kansas City Region
NE = Northeast Region
NW = Northwest Region

OZ = Ozark Region
SE = Southeast Region
SW = Southwest Region
SL = St. Louis Region

What MDC Heard . . .

Deer Management

Background: MDC deer management historically was designed to restore, grow and maximize deer herds, and there are still some areas where low populations warrant this approach. In the majority of the state today, however, we more often hear about too many deer and shifting emphasis to better control and even herd reduction. Significant wildlife regulations changes were made in 2003 to encourage hunters to harvest more deer and balance the composition of the herd.

Deer nuisances, including crop damage, vehicle accidents, etc.

- A recent bill to require MDC to pay \$250/deer for vehicle collision was primarily to “send a message” that management to reduce collisions is an important priority. (SE)
- Deer damage crops – garden and row. In response, people no longer plant or change to other crops to avoid the costs of damage. (SE)
- Concerned about the \$250/deer bill. Damage control is not entirely in MDCs hands: parks closed to hunting, safe driving, and potential abuse of payments are beyond MDC control. (SE)
- Deer have “torn up” the land I grew up on at Watkins Mill. (NW)
- High deer population is of concern locally. (KC)
- Deer need better control – no longer plant corn or beans in the vegetable garden, or even some row crops because depredation is too severe. Food plots planted as part of various farm programs are compounding the problem by enabling more and more deer to survive the winter and reproduce. (SE)
- At Watkins Mill State Park, huge deer herds need more harvest. (NW)
- Urban deer are a big problem, MDC is helpful to city in laying out options for us to consider for dealing with them. (CE)

Quality Deer Management

- Success story: over 100 landowners are using quality deer management on their property. Suggest a pilot program in Units 29 and 30 in cooperation with landowners. (SL)
- Complimented Department moves toward quality deer management, not emphasizing trophies but more bucks in age classes beyond yearling. (NE)

Chronic wasting disease

- A white-tail breeder is not opposed to Chronic Wasting Disease monitoring, but thinks the process needs some changes. (NE)
- Surprised that CWD did not get mentioned by other forum participants. (OZ)

Share the Harvest Program

- Share the Harvest is an excellent program, but it could potentially be a stronger tool to encourage more harvest if a way could be found to pay for processing costs. Hunters have a considerable investment in every deer, but paying an extra \$50-\$100 for processing meat to give away is a significant disincentive to harvest of extra deer. (NE)
- Consider paying part of the processing fee for deer donated to the Share the Harvest program. (KC)
- Share the Harvest is a great program, but finding a way to pay the processing fees would do a lot to encourage more people to participate. (OZ)

Deer seasons and regulations

- The December antlerless deer season is tough for processors, because it conflicts with many other commercial activities associated with the holidays. (OZ)
- Implement landowner deer check methods that don't require transport of animal to a distant check station. Neighborhood check in should be considered: it would save driving time and inconvenience for hunters. (KC)
- Suggest telephone check in of landowner harvested deer, or even by groups of hunters in deer camps. (KC)
- When people don't claim deer meat left for processing, it costs processors. How can you help us reduce this? (OZ)
- Please simplify and reduce the size of permits and tags, and note better models in Arkansas and North Carolina. (OZ)
- Youth hunts are good, but could landowner firearm deer permits be issued early enough for youth hunters? (NW)
- Suggestion: kill two does in order to get permit to kill buck. (NW)

What MDC Said . . . Deer Management

- An effort is underway by The Conservation Federation of Missouri to help fund processing of deer donated to Share the Harvest. Constitutional issues limit use of MDC funds in this way, but some funding may be possible in conjunction with private or non-profit groups.
- Statutes require donated deer to be inspected at licensed meat processing facilities before they can be given to food pantries. The Department is considering whether to ask the Legislature to consider the impacts that requirement has on the willingness and ability of smaller-scale meat processors to serve demands throughout the state.
- It might be possible to help processors by moving unclaimed meat into the Share the Harvest Program.
- Beyond the important recreational aspects of deer hunting, deer herd management is a major economic issue statewide that is partly driven by the voice of the agriculture community. MDC seeks to strike a balance between recreational and economic aspects.
- In order to gather information about the extent of hunting on farms, plans are in the works for a free landowner permit. A preprinted transportation tag, picked up at permit vendors, will replace the user-created "farm tag" now used by private landowners hunting their own land.
- A pilot telecheck system is planned, but important data is gleaned via check stations that biologists need to make informed future population management decisions.
- MDC and the Department of Natural Resources have made great progress in recent years to better manage deer at state parks. Many parks set management objectives in cooperation with the University of Missouri, and special hunts may occur when those objectives are triggered. Management of deer on state parks is improving. Everyone needs to understand and respect that Department of Natural Resources' park lands have a different mission than MDC lands.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Deer Management
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- Responses to audience questions:
- Illinois and Wisconsin are the closest states where chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been found. (SW)
- No Missourians have died from “Mad Cow” disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE) or CWD, although some have died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD). BSE and CWD are both animal diseases with similarities to CJD. There is no evidence that CWD can affect humans at all. (SW)
- We see no evidence that liberalized doe harvest poses any threat to local populations in areas where deer are scarce. In areas where they are abundant, expanded doe harvest is important to controlling the population. The new “free farm tag” system is a way to document farm deer harvest by landowner hunters and provide better information to set regulations. A similar plan will be in effect for turkeys in spring 2005. (KC)
- Bonus tags for antlerless deer are specific to a particular management unit, but any-deer tags are not. Unlimited antlerless harvest does not apply to farm tag/landowner harvest. (KC)

What MDC Heard . . .

Land Acquisition

Background: Following approval of *Design for Conservation* in 1976, MDC sought to acquire additional land, approximately doubling its holdings in a 20-year period. The Department now owns approximately 1.6% of Missouri's 44 million acres. All land not donated was acquired from willing sellers and guided by professional appraisals. Emphasis has now shifted from acquisition of land toward management and development of existing lands. The \$15 million dollars budgeted annually for acquisition a decade ago has been reduced to \$1.5 million today. This smaller acquisition budget allows purchase of inholdings, unique areas and an occasional addition of larger tracts where partnerships or federal programs pick up most of the costs.

Support for more acquisition

- Acquire more public land. This is still a public-land-poor state compared to many others. Since the burden of diversity maintenance and access to outdoor recreation depend more and more heavily on these lands as time passes, it is not time to slow acquisition efforts. (OZ)
- Recognize that there is value in wilderness, and that nature has been able to manage fine without help. Not every acre needs to be in some sort of "rotation program" to be actively managed one day. (OZ)
- Continue to buy land before it is developed. (SL)
- Don't like the recent shift from acquisition to development, but buy only what you can manage well. Funds need to be put into habitat improvement. (SL)

Opposition to more acquisition

- MDC owns enough land, and should minimize new acquisition. The latter only competes with private citizens who want land. (SE)

Specific acquisition interests

- Land to hunt is scarce: areas like Diana Bend are unsafe because of overcrowding, but lower income people can't pay \$2000-\$4000 for permission to hunt on some private land. (CE)
- Rural hunting opportunities are declining, a big problem given the huge food base for deer. Land in fewer hands today, and it's often leased to urban hunters restricting options for rural folks. (CE)
- I'd like to see more river or boat access development. (OZ)
- We need quality shooting facilities for the 138 kids in the Vernon County 4-H shooting program since no good facilities exist within a reasonable drive of Nevada. (KC)
- MDC should acquire more land, and in particular consider Rocky Ridge in Ste. Genevieve County. (SE)

What MDC Said . . . Land Acquisition

- MDC has an extremely limited budget for land acquisition, and policy emphasis is on proper management of land already owned.
- Curtailed land acquisition has less effect on boat access development because federal Sport Fish Restoration dollars fund much of that work.
- Some people want developments on areas, but others want them as primitive as possible. It is a balancing act to meet both needs.
- MDC gets pulled in both directions on the land acquisition issue, but present fiscal restraint and goals have replaced the aggressive buying years (after *Design for Conservation* passed) with a limited acquisition program.
- Forums help us understand desirable middle ground, but we must take care of what we already bought and not overextend. It is interesting that in Wisconsin, which has far more land in public ownership than Missouri, the current year's land acquisition budget is \$28 million – compared to \$1.5 million at MDC.
- 1976 targets for acquisition have largely been met. We are still looking to acquire key inholdings and a few well defined needs.

What MDC Heard . . . Quail & Small Game Management

Background: As land use patterns and agricultural methods have changed over several decades, quail and some other small game populations have declined nationally. This limits Missourians in many ways. Fewer people hunt quail and fewer young people learn to hunt small game. The song of the bobwhite quail is heard less often and species once common along field edges are less seen.

Concerns

- High concern about quail populations in Lewis County, possibly attributable to high populations of quail predators. Are predators part of the problem? (NE)
- Concerns about declining quail habitat. (KC)
- Do for quail what we did for deer and turkey! (SE)

Remedies

- As for quail habitat, getting the work done is a bigger obstacle than getting the information out. There need to be contractors and equipment to help get quail habitat improvement jobs done right. (NE)
- Expand the Landowners Assisting Wildlife Survival (LAWS) program and other private land practice funding. Personal experience shows that much can be done to successfully restore quail. (NE)
- Thanks for filling the quail coordinator position at central office. Now implement the state quail management plan, Northern Bobwhite Quail Conservation Initiative and Statewide Quail Council creation supported by Commissioner Bradford at a recent Conservation Commission meeting. (KC)
- Thanks for matching Quail Unlimited funds for private land assistance. Credited the existence of the 1/8 of one percent sales tax for making that possible. (KC)
- Make a major financial commitment to upland game, and spend it in nontraditional ways including publicity (purchased advertisement in farm magazines) outside normal venues. (KC)
- MDC should address the issues of quail and rabbits. It is not the result of habitat loss. We have an out of control predator problem (coyotes, fox, bobcat, house cats, skunks). (SL)

What MDC Said . . . Quail/Small Game Management

- The idea of a Quail Council is not totally fleshed out yet but is driven by strong Commission concern and will happen.
- Furbearer season is now 30 days longer, and a bobcat season open in NE for the first time.
- Predator control depends on trapping and that in turn depends on fur prices, which MDC can't control. Counties may once have had bounties, but never MDC. We do not believe bounties to be effective.
- Bottom line for quail is that habitat has changed substantially. Other species with similar habitat needs but different predator issues have similarly struggled. Turkey consumption of quail is not likely a problem, since other grassland species with similar habitat requirements to those of quail are also declining.
- Quail mortality due to hunting is more a function of season length than bag limit. MDC has discussed the merits of shortening the quail season in the past.

What MDC Heard . . .

Forests, Trees and Fire Management

Background: Many Missourians recreate in forests, others make their livelihoods from it and all seem to enjoy its beauty and value as a part of our natural environment. MDC manages over one-half million acres of forest, and works with thousands of forest landowners each year. We help many communities manage urban forests, trees being an important feature in all towns and communities. Fire today is sometimes used carefully as a land management tool, but MDC and local fire departments form the frontline of defense of people, property and habitat against wildfire.

Public forests and harvest

- Public forests are generally in good shape and well managed. (OZ)
- More harvest makes sense now from a forest health perspective, and would help people who depend on wood products for their livelihood. (OZ)
- MDC is doing a good job in support of forestry, but other pressures aren't helping. Non-government organizations have delayed many needed sales over environmental issues, and new air quality regulations have chased many charcoal companies out of business. (OZ)
- Forest production is important, and much of St. Louis was built with Ozark lumber a century ago. (OZ)
- Forest management should be seen as good jobs and quality products, not "raping the land." MDC knows this and helps us. (OZ)
- Move more foresters out of the office, develop a faster and easier sales process, and concentrate on stands in greater jeopardy. (SE)
- On state land, mortality exceeds harvest, which means monetary loss to the state and increased hazard to those using state land. (SE)
- At Watkins Mill State Park, mature trees die and go to waste: why not harvest and put proceeds back into the park? (NW)
- Manage trees in state parks. (NW)

Private forests

- Private forests are in good shape, too. (OZ)
- MDC should get out of helping private landowners mark and sell timber and focus on caring for its own lands. (SE)
- Thanks for MDC's technical specialists (e.g., pathologist) who help tree growers. MDC should consider the opportunity tree farms provide for research, and that growers would be eager to participate. (NE)
- Internet based sales of trees and plants significantly increase the risk of new exotic pests and diseases being brought to Missouri. (NE)

Oak decline

- MDC can best lead by example. Concentrate on stands that are in jeopardy, and put state forests in jeopardy ahead of private forests that are not severely affected. (SE)
- Oak decline is a major problem and research is needed to learn how best to manage it; MDC leadership to address this is important, and a cooperative venture may be appropriate to fund and conduct research. (OZ)

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Forests, Trees and Fire Management

- Conservation lands grow more timber than is harvested, and this becomes a bigger problem when the oak mortality is brought into the equation. (OZ)
- Oak decline is a big concern, and MDC is not moving quickly enough. Die-off is running 2-3 times faster than sales. Taxpayer does not like to see state timber allowed to go to waste. (SE)
- Concerns about red oak decline, having recently cut stands that had gone too long waiting for harvest and largely ruined. (SE)

Fire departments

- We like the federal excess property and grants program. (CE)
- We look forward to reporting fires online, and are eager for level 2 fire training. (CE)
- Interested in more “dry hydrants” at ponds for firefighting use. (CE)
- Fire Chiefs appreciate the fire grant and surplus equipment programs, and look forward to being able to make reports via computer instead of on paper. They like the Big Rivers Compact for fire fighting, and appreciate the fire training MDC supports. (SW)
- Grants and equipment programs really help local fire departments; some of us could not make ends meet without MDC help. (NW)
- Matching grants for local fire departments help tremendously. (NW)
- Thanks for all the supportive fire-fighting programs. (NW)

Other

- Compliments for progress identifying and putting “Best Management Practices” in place for loggers. (SE)
- Consider a “preferred” logger program which would limit the amount of time a MDC forester spends on a private sale. (SE)
- Certify tree service businesses so customers will know who is trained and capable to meet tree management needs. (SW)
- Complimented Forestry for its work – they save a lot of ailing trees. (SW)
- MDC gives good service and support to tree service businesses. (SW)
- Support for urban forests through Forest ReLeaf of Missouri and Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance (TRIM) matching grants is a big help for urban tree maintenance. More is needed. (CE)
- Continue to use of fire as a management tool. (OZ)

What MDC Said . . . Forests, Trees and Fire Management

- Private Land Services, including forestry, is a big agency commitment, evidenced by the recent creation of a new Private Land Division. *Ninety-three percent* of Missouri land is in private ownership, and many private landowners want assistance with Forestry issues. MDC is here to serve citizens and always looking for ways to provide this service.
- The MDC philosophy on forests is that we need a sustainable, healthy forest. Education is important to this \$3 billion Missouri industry.

Continuation: What MDC Said . . . Forests, Trees and Fire Management
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- Public lands are only part of the equation, and harvests there are driven by many factors, with dollars not as important as the forest health, habitat and long-term viability benefits. Better management on private lands is critical, and MDC focuses on helping landowners who want help to achieve their objectives in ways that promote long term sustainability.
- MDC tries to manage timber in cooperation with landowners, finding common ground, and identifying win/win policies. MDC is not out to impose hardship on people, and lack of trust is the biggest obstacle to finding sensible answers.
- The research field office being developed in West Plains will have a strong forestry focus.
- An expanded research effort is under way, as are some big sales in oak decline areas.
- MDC is carefully monitoring oak decline and focusing on managing the highest priority areas.
- Few Missourians know about the Department's programs to help fire departments, especially in rural areas. We are looking into ways to expand the federal surplus property program to provide more small equipment (e.g., file cabinets) that might help small departments make ends meet.

What MDC Heard . . . Outreach and Education

Background: MDC is well known for its magazine and publications, and school teachers value its help to teach new generations the importance of conserving natural resources. Mandatory hunter education involves thousands of people annually and is a major entry point for young people into the hunting community.

Issues of priority

- MDC should fight an image problem. I've had great help, but know many other landowners miss out because they "don't want Conservation on my property," thinking you may make them do something they don't want to. (NW)
- Priority must be given to getting more kids on board, not necessarily as hunters but as outdoors people who value and understand wildlife. (SW)
- Women are important to us and represent over 51% of the vote. Get them involved, too. (SW)
- We need more ways to reach women, youth, single moms with kids, senior citizens and people with handicaps. Many would enjoy programs to go hunting and fishing. (SL)
- Agency should be seriously asking: "Why are no other black people in this room?" and we all need to "get off our backsides and help African-American citizens participate in conservation." (SL)
- Education is the key. The Governor's Task Force in the mid-1990s said MDC should lead at environmental education, but there seems to be an MDC shift away from education (reduced funds for Stream Teams and eliminated funding for Missouri Environmental Education Association). (SL)
- Help correct misperceptions generated by "animal rights" movement. (SE)
- Help to promote fur sales in Missouri. (CE)
- Increased publicity is needed to stop tree topping. (CE)
- Provide statistical information comparing the number of hunters on public and private lands to help show the importance of public land to Missouri hunters. (NE)
- We appreciate MDC cooperation on Lewis & Clark projects, a key step in the ongoing effort to connect people to their river and heritage. Want people to participate in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial on the water, and appreciate MDC opening areas to camping for its duration. (CE)
- Need to increase recreational use of the Missouri River and dispel myths about it. (CE)
- MDC public use surveys have helped understand the volume of Missouri River use, and it is important for them to continue. (CE)

Publications, teaching materials

- We like MDC books (plants, trees, birds etc.), and support the Flora of Missouri book/research project. (OZ)
- Support education, publications and training about equines and riding. (OZ)
- We like all the educational materials the Department publishes. Thanks! (SW)
- Thanks for good materials and educational programs. (NW)
- Thanks for a good job, especially for great publications (NW)
- MDC provides materials of high value. (NE)
- Could MDC and DNR, get together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Forest Service to make a common map of all lands, not four different ones? (OZ)

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Outreach and Education

- Suggest a newsletter on the ecological role of trapping, which is an important management tool. Tell the good things it does and the evils it avoids (e.g., water quality damage). (SE)
- Subscription to Arkansas Wildlife costs \$15 per year. MDC only charges \$7 per year for their magazine for non-residents. Might think of a small fee for residents if it meant more habitat and salary increases for staff, another mile of trails. The time may have come to charge a small fee. (SL)

Teachers' workshops

- Praise for MDC teachers' workshops, the staff of education consultants, and the following ways MDC helps school teachers: (NE)
- Include MAP test related activities.
- Develop cross-curricular lessons.
- Introduce teachers to people who are real scientists and to literature of high quality.
- Meet other teachers in stimulating places like the Presley Center.
- Retain and recruit good quality personnel and allow them to come to the classroom to enhance curriculum. (SE)
- Continue education workshops for teachers. Workshops and courses for teachers are excellent and needed. Attendance and materials received at workshops have inspired other teachers to become involved with conservation. (SE)
- Supports materials received through workshops as great to use in classrooms. I have received many useful materials and books which could not otherwise have been purchased due to budget cuts in school system. (SE)
- Workshop materials for classroom use have helped get uninterested students excited about learning. (SE)

Schools

- Do more "Evening with Wildlife" programs in schools. (NE)
- Teach more about identifying unusual plants. (SE)
- Thanked MDC for help on projects like outdoor classrooms, and commended education consultants like Jack Woodhead and Jeff Cantrell. (SW)
- Increase funding and staff assistance for outdoor classroom development. (KC)
- Commended the Quail Academy concept, encouraging the Department to keep or expand the program. Expressed support for the 4-H shooting competitions, and asked MDC to help support it where we can. (NE)
- Stream Team has been our most effective learning program, with classes excited about their water quality monitoring at two local bridges. Generally, the district's kids love wildlife and conservation, and MDCs materials mesh well. (SW)
- Thanks for past support of the Missouri Quail Academy. Continue support in the future. (KC)
- Education is really important at all levels. (SL)

Hunter education

- The new hunter safety curriculum is good, but the new test has big problems – too many first time failures, answers that don't match the books. (OZ)
- Bowhunter safety certification is not required but is valuable, and more classes are needed – been waiting 4 years to have a class. (OZ)
- More information on modern muzzleloaders and loads needs to be put in the hunter safety manual. (SW)

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Outreach and Education

- Instructors want to take people to “next level” during hunter education courses to demonstrate how to safely use firearms. The demand for such opportunities outstrips the availability of good facilities. (KC)
- MDC shooting facilities have to be scheduled 6+ months in advance and travel is necessary. (KC)
- The compact disc of hunter education materials was not of value. Prefers flexibility of individual slides and other visual aids. (KC)
- Consider offering refresher hunter education courses to Missouri hunters. (KC)
- Thanks for support of youth hunting clinics locally; specifically mentioned Brian Bethel’s work to organize FFA trap and hunter education courses.

Do more . . .

- MDC is too low key: toot your horn a little more! (OZ)
- Provide more education of private landowners in timber management, especially to prevent erosion. Paddocks for cattle are a good idea. (SE)
- Continue outreach programs, particularly about the positive role of hunting. (SE)
- Continue to provide more courses on various topics. (SE)

Other ideas and comments

- We have a lot of bridge crossings in the state. Have attractive signage there to say “keep our rivers clean” to send a message to millions of motorists. (SL)
- Education is important, so the public will understand the value of trapping to wildlife management efforts. (SE)

What MDC Said . . . Outreach and Education

- One of MDCs biggest challenges is finding ways to connect urban kids with anything in the outdoors.
- Not everyone wants the government on their land, usually due to fears about losing control. MDC is not about control, we are about helping people who want help to conserve resources. We try to battle misinformation to the contrary, mainly by working hard, projecting a positive attitude and putting customer service first. That does not mean we don’t make mistakes: call us if you hear about something wrong, and give us a chance to “own up” if we erred.
- The demand to go one-on-one with the schools is there but manpower is limited. MDC is trying to do more with schools and scout groups.
- MDC is actually moving towards more education programs. The idea of Missouri Environmental Education Association was that we would get it started and let it grow on its own, and we still support it but less so financially.
- Director Hoskins has directed more emphasis on getting into the schools, and he transferred Outdoor Skills staff from Protection Division to Outreach and Education Division to get a greater emphasis.
- We are aware of the problems with the new hunter education exam, and our Outdoor Skills staff is working to fix it.

Continuation: What MDC Said . . . Outreach and Education
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- If anyone has any ideas or would like to partner with MDC, we welcome them. MDC has quite a few youth programs but is always open to creating more programs. We rely on partners to help with this.
- Fisheries Division is committed to education. We have several fishing related programs to reach youths and would like to see them expanded. One St. Louis region staff member visited 10,000 school kids last year.
- The current hunter training curriculum can be updated as needed to best meet individual instructor needs.
- The hunter education slide series was only recently introduced. Where it does not meet instructor needs, local staff can help secure alternative resources.

What MDC Heard . . .

Seasons, Permits and Regulations

Background: MDCs Regulations Committee carefully reviews the *Wildlife Code* annually, adapting it to meet changing needs. The Code and permitting processes are important to millions of people, and many regulations involve a balancing act among different interests and users. The Code is the tool by which the Missouri Conservation Commission manages resources, or more specifically the interactions of people with them.

Seasons

- Swan Lake goose season should open about 3 weeks later. (NE)
- The northern zone waterfowl season should open a week earlier. (NE)
- Early goose season takes away from (better) December hunting opportunities and does not impact local goose numbers. Consider combining the early goose and teal seasons. (KC)
- Consider changes to goose season: the current setup is “a joke,” at least outside urban areas. Early geese don’t decoy. The Eastern Prairie Population goose population limits our hunting to 30 days. (KC)
- Raccoons are a high population resource young hunters should learn about and enjoy. Try an earlier season opener, partly because Illinois, with an earlier opening, does not allow Missourians to participate until our state’s raccoon season is open. (NE)
- There are not enough white-winged doves to shoot, so you should not have opened a season here; ditto on brants (Atlantic or Pacific) and timber rattlesnakes. (NW)
- How about youth hunts for quail or pheasant, perhaps one day before season opener? (NW)
- How about a “landowner hunt” a week prior to the November season?

Permits

- Consider a short-term non-resident permit, for example \$10/day, to encourage out of state hunters. Many farmers were paid a \$5/acre maintenance fee for USDA Conservation Reserve Program areas which required no maintenance, and wondered if this funding could be put to better use. (NE)
- Should requirements to become a hunting/fishing guide be stronger? (NE)
- Could a single shot season be offered to provide something intermediate between black powder and regular firearms seasons? (SW)
- Simplify and reduce the size of permits and tags. Arkansas and North Carolina models are better. (OZ)

Turkeys

- Allow turkey hunters to take 2 birds/day, and consider all-day turkey hunting. (KC)
- States with all-day spring turkey hunting are not doing as well as Missouri is. (KC)
- Arkansas game wardens who hunt here say Missouri is right to stop turkey hunting at 1 p.m. All-day hunt in Arkansas does not work as well. (NW)
- Supports MDCs conservative approach to turkey management, but look at fall turkey hunting with dogs and all-day spring turkey hunting. Step up efforts to control poaching. (SE)
- Other regulatory issues
- Give stiffer fines for poachers and trespassers. (NW)
- Legalize hand fishing. (NW)
- Please simplify regulations – with so many categories, it’s hard to interpret who can hunt what, when and where. (OZ)

What MDC Said . . . Seasons, Permits and Regulations

- Regulations Committee is taking a hard look at some requirements for hunting/fishing guides, particularly because we have experienced instances where someone providing professional guide services had permits revoked.
- Fines are set by local courts, and local standards are set by judges and prosecutors.
- All-day turkey hunting has been discussed almost annually for several years, but Missouri maintains a conservative approach to setting turkey hunting regulations. The idea of allowing hunters to harvest 2 birds/day has not been considered recently.
- It is difficult to set season dates to please everyone.
- The early goose season start is targeted to manage resident giant Canada geese, then hunt geese and ducks together when colder weather arrives.

Response to question: Why even have a season [that closes] on crows? (KC)

- Crows are included within the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so Missouri is required to have a season specific to crows.

What MDC Heard . . .

Trapping, Nuisance Wildlife and Otters

Background: In nature, many wildlife populations experience huge fluctuations, and almost every creature is involved in some sort of predator/prey cycle. With human activities introduced, wild animals can produce very real problems, including severe damage to crops and property. Trapping is one important tool for controlling nuisance wildlife damage.

In the 1980s, MDC reintroduced otters statewide, and many welcome their return to Missouri's streams. We have since learned much about the damage these prolific breeders and feeders can do to fish farms, private farm ponds and even some stream fisheries.

Otters

- The otter situation is worse than people think. There are no bullfrogs any more and otters eat even big flatheads. I saw a 32 pound flathead that had been taken by an otter. (NW)
- Otters have cleaned all the channel cats from his ponds. (NW)
- Otters are a problem on 102 River. (NW)
- We have severe local problems with river otters. Fish populations in my stocked private ponds and lakes have been decimated. Restocking is not a viable option unless something is done about otter population concurrently. (KC)
- MDC caved to anti-hunting groups when it set river otter trapping zones. (KC)
- Otters are a big problem for the fishery. What can be done to get them under control? (NE)

Other furbearers

- East of Highway 65 and north of Highway 36, there are big problems with bobcat nuisances. (NW)
- Raccoons are a year round problem trappers can't really address until November. (CE)

Trapping generally

- Trappers are highly regulated, and do not over-harvest. (SE)
- Suggest a newsletter on the ecological role of trapping as an important management tool. Tell the good things it does and the evils it avoids (e.g., water quality damage). (SE)
- Recruitment to trapping is keyed on fur prices, so that 3000 members in the 1980s have declined to 1100 today. (SE)
- Need help to correct misperceptions generated by "animal rights" movement. (SE)
- Trappers are the front line defense against wildlife nuisances, otters being the most recent case in point. (CE)
- Trappers need tools and incentives to help, and they are not always forthcoming (e.g., 160 conibear, season extension on wrong end), given MDCs historic opposition to profit from wildlife. Declining prices reduced trapper numbers, rising prices help. Trappers have to offset costs. (CE)
- I've never had a dog caught in a trap.

What MDC Said . . . Trapping, Nuisance Wildlife & Otters

- We acknowledge that otters have repopulated better than expected and are causing significant problems. When the restocking program started 20 years ago, we did not know how prolific they would become, nor were we short on trappers.
- Rules have been eased to manage the otter problem in southern Missouri. North Missouri problem reports have been few and isolated, at least before this forum.
- MDC is working to connect members of the Missouri Trappers Association with landowners in otter “hot spots” in an effort to focus trapping efforts (this service is at no charge to the landowner).
- Where lakes experience otter problems, an electrofishing survey may need to be conducted.
- In 2004, the bobcat season will be opened statewide.
- While the trapping season is limited, wildlife (e.g., raccoons) actually causing damage can be dealt with at any time under the *Wildlife Code*.
- In north Missouri, sites that have lost catfish populations to otters retain relatively stable bass/sunfish populations.

What MDC Heard . . . Horse Use on MDC Areas

Background: Various equestrian groups enjoy MDC areas and want to see more trails and facilities. Trails are demanding to create and maintain, and offer many challenges to managers, including potential conflicts with other user groups. Every trail needs management (which takes money and manpower) for safety, erosion control, law enforcement, and support facilities like parking lots and privies. MDC managers constantly struggle to meet riders' needs while maintaining the system in a way that provides a positive experience for both riding and non-riding users.

Areas with trails

- Good job on the trails at Poosey Conservation Area, but need more accommodations like restrooms and benches. (NW)
- Appreciate the horse trails at Poosey and the good job Terry Troutman does. (NW)
- Thanks for the horse riding trails at Indian Creek Conservation Area. (NW)
- Keep the horse trails at Rudolf Bennitt Conservation Area. (OZ)

Trail use and stewardship

- We support education, publications and training about equines and riding and encourage trail stewardship, including trail adoption for maintenance or cleanup, and leave-no-trace ride philosophy. (OZ)
- We advocate horse trails, promote keeping existing trails open and encourage horseback riders to exercise common sense and practice leave-no-trace riding. (NE)
- Conservation lands should be for every use, but I have some concern that access has been declining. (OZ)
- Backcountry Horsemen want to keep horse trails open, reduce conflicts and help with labor where we can. (CE)

Needs

- We need more dirt trails and to "bust" those who litter. (NW)
- Equestrian trails are needed and there are willing partners in our county to help. Audrain County is the "saddle horse capital of the world!" (CE)
- We support horse trails (especially local trails) and access for people (including riders) with disabilities. (OZ)
- Answers about horse use are not always the same from regional and central offices at MDC. (OZ)

What MDC Said . . . Horse Use on MDC Areas

- Any road on a Department area is available to horse riders. We have several areas with trails and some where trails would be inappropriate.
- Ecologically sound horse trail management is costly and restrictions on the ways MDC can use various revenue sources limit flexibility. The challenge is to strike a good balance, and we always appreciate feedback on this subject.
- MDC has a new Adopt-A-Trail program. Information is online at <http://www.mdc.state.mo.us/trails/adopt.htm>

Continuation: What MDC Said . . . Horse Use on MDC Areas
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- Missouri has the third largest horse population among all states.
- At Rudolf Bennitt Conservation Area, 12 miles of trail a decade ago became 55 miles of “user created” trails, more than we can maintain and a problem for other area users. We have and will continue to work with users to reduce total miles to a manageable level, and seek more adopt-a-trail options like the program at Three Creeks Conservation Area.

What MDC Heard . . . Legislative Issues

Background: The Conservation Commission was created by the voters for many reasons, including a desire to limit the impact of politics on resource management. It has considerable independence, but annually submits its budget to the Missouri Legislature and is subject to many state laws. MDC is always concerned about the way laws affect resources and agency operations. Legislators play a key role in communicating with the people of Missouri. They call us to help meet constituent needs, and to regularly explain and develop regulations and policy.

Issues

- MDC is an example others look to. Its financial support should continue and biology should continue to dominate politics as a consideration. (NE)
- Keep politicians out of conservation funds. (NE)
- Legislative proposal for \$250/deer payment: control is not in MDCs hands, but we do need better harvest and better deer population control in state parks. (SE)
- The 1/8 of one percent sales tax for conservation must be protected from legislative threats. (SW)
- Most people don't want anyone to touch the dedicated tax funds that benefit MDC. (KC)
- Leave 1/8 of one percent sales tax dedicated to MDC and conservation efforts. (KC)
- Base regulations on biology and not emotion. (KC)
- Can the budget of MDC be protected so that you can keep providing the services? (SL)
- What is MDC doing to educate new legislators on conservation issues?

Comments from legislators

- Legislator doesn't expect a problem keeping the 1/8 of one percent tax as is now. (KC)
- People are not accepting new taxes, and a seed has been planted among legislators to "raid" the conservation tax. However, legislators seem more concerned over dedicated taxes that do not go to purposes for which they were dedicated. (KC)
- Legislator notes Appropriations Committee members took quite a bit of abuse over past actions in regard to the 1/8 of one percent conservation tax, expects they all paid attention. (KC)
- Educate legislators like me. We want to understand better what MDC does. (NW)
- When people tell MDC what to achieve, it figures out how to get there. (NW)
- Legislature talk about revisiting the conservation sales tax is a bad idea: Missouri has a sound track record, respected program, and leaders who listen carefully when you speak. (OZ)

What MDC Said . . . Legislative Issues

- If the people of Missouri decide to remove the 1/8 of one percent sales tax funding, they could do so but would have to amend the constitution. Most taxes were enacted in law, not written in the constitution. We take very seriously the special priority Missourians have given conservation, and our responsibility to spend those funds as intended.
- State budgets are tight and sales tax revenues are down. We are in the process of identifying 50 positions to eliminate in an effort to keep costs down.
- MDC works with all legislators. New legislators get group training from all agencies and MDC staff work with them individually to answer questions and explain our perspective.

What MDC Heard . . .

Gravel and Stream Management

Background: Missouri streams are important in many ways and to many people, including those who wish to mine gravel from streams. Gravel is important to everyone –for concrete work, road construction and many other purposes – but also for the fish and wildlife. Streams are the primary available source of gravel in many parts of the state, with alternatives prohibitively expensive. MDC does not regulate gravel removal from streams (the Land Reclamation Commission in the Department of Natural Resources does), but has a voice as gravel use affects fish and wildlife. The challenge is to find the best ways this resource may be used without destabilizing habitats and river environments.

Regulation of gravel mining

- Concern about gravel mining – not opposition, but MDC could have communicated better during recent policy negotiations of the Land Reclamation Commission. (OZ)
- Gravel mining in streams is important and an area where Department openness could improve. Work remains to be done on the pending rule but middle ground is in sight. (OZ)
- County officials should be involved when regulatory decisions about stream gravel mining are pending, both by law and because it is important to us. That didn't happen for Texas County in recent rulemaking efforts. (OZ)
- Banning gravel mining below river surface level makes it harder and more costly. One operator went from 5 sites to 17 to produce the same amount of gravel because of this rule. Is that really better? How is it different from what floods do when miners go below the river surface? (OZ)
- It seems there is a middle ground on stream gravel mining that multiple interests can live with. This is a more promising situation than in the past. (OZ)

Local landowner concerns for their streams

- MDC needs to do something to encourage removal of gravel from streams so water can flow. Individuals should need a permit for gravel removal from streams. (SE)
- I'm concerned about gravel in streams and encourage you to direct resources to better understand the problem and correct whatever is wrong. (SE)
- On the Bourbeuse and other streams, gravel accretion is a huge problem. (SL)
- When streams fill with gravel, there is no fish habitat and less water surface. Accretion on bends pushes water into the opposite bank, causing bank blowouts, erosion, and topsoil loss – real concerns no matter how good the stream corridor is. (SL)
- All streams in Missouri have different problems and all affect fish and wildlife habitat. MDC does not have regulatory control over the streams, but all outdoor sports groups need to understand the problems and look for answers. (SL)
- Come up with a plan to deal with gravel accretion and bank stabilization that landowners can practically use. (SL)

What MDC Said . . . Gravel and Stream Management

- MDC shares concerns about stream gravel mining, and works behind the scenes and publicly to find a middle ground policy that all interests can support.
- The gravel issue is indeed important, and finding common ground on this issue is not an easy task. Sometimes it is best accomplished with candid discussions out of the limelight, especially when working with legislative interests.
- Primary responsibility for gravel in streams rests with the Department of Natural Resources and the Corps of Engineers. MDC does speak on these issues and is a voting member of the Land Reclamation Commission.
- Stream gravel and erosion problems can't often be dealt with just by one landowner because the problem runs up or down stream for miles.
- Solving stream problems typically involves groups of landowners and people who understand and are involved in their watershed. We take a watershed view of stream issues.
- There is a cooperative project on the Little Bourbeuse which provides a good example of landowners getting together to solve multiple problems.

Region Specific Input

Each Regional Coordination Team organized the local forum and set the agenda to meet local needs. In all cases, preliminary remarks were made by the Director or Deputy Director and some brief presentation by regional staff preceded the public input.

The preceding ten sections of this summary were topical in nature and gathered comments from around the state into a single section. Many comments did not fit with one of those topics or were region-specific. They are equally important and are reported in the following eight sections.

A few MDC comments are recorded here, but many local items were addressed directly between staff and participants during breaks and after the forum formally concluded.

Northeast Regional Forum
September 16, 2003
Hannibal Inn & Conference Center
Hannibal



At least twenty citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Northeast Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Bill Bergh of MDC's Private Land Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Fisheries Regional Supervisor Brian Todd made a short presentation about the economics of conservation, showing the strong positive impact of hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation on the Missouri economy and state revenues.

Participants were asked to submit issues of concern in writing in advance of the forum. Many of the written issues were mentioned during the meeting and noted somewhere in this document. Most MDC response to issues was addressed one-on-one during breaks and following adjournment.

Citizens spoke to explain their interests and perspectives, including Missouri House of Representatives members Brian Munzlinger, District 1, and Wes Shoemyer, District 9.

What MDC Heard . . . Northeast Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Conservation is one thing we do in Missouri better than anywhere else – above politics.
- Urbanization and suburbanization have increased the need to communicate better to young people about hunting, fishing, and conveying a genuine love for the land.
- Providing an Illinois perspective, Missouri outdoors folk have “got it made.” Expressed appreciation of LaBelle Lake, and interest in MDC presence at the west end of the Quincy lock and dam.
- What is happening on the Ted Shanks and B. K. Leech Conservation Areas?
- Is there is a long-term plan for the Ted Shanks Conservation Area, and is MDC pursuing purchase of the bottoms near Soulard Conservation Area?
- Is it possible to provide incentives for farmers to leave fencerows in place?
- Commended MDC efforts and urged focus on good communications and strong partnerships.
- Encouraged participation in the Stream Team program and work to keep streams clean.
- Furnish better security for campers at Sever Lake. Need better quail management program.
- Seems like all other flyways are doing well, but Mississippi flyway is falling flat on its face.
- There is great value to having conservation agents walk by and comment in a positive way. Hiding in the bushes has its place, but youth especially need to learn to see the agent as friend and security in outdoor activity.

What MDC Said . . . Northeast Region

- The Conservation Commission visited the Ted Shanks Conservation Area about a year ago and made a commitment to fixing the problems there. Local plans include an October 11 open house at the area.

Supplemental issues submitted in written form before this forum, as summarized from registration forms by regional staff and distributed at the forum:

Agriculture Pesticide Management

Anti-Hunters

Collision policy – Deer/auto

Communication

Concession Stand at Henry Sever Lake – Open it back up for bait, etc.

Continuous effort to use conservation tax money for non-conservation purposes

Coordination – Coordinate material with other departments, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, etc.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)-Management/Food Plot/Mowing

CRP – Maintenance according to contract agreement

CRP – enforcement of rules

Deer – Overpopulation

Deer – Captive

Deer – December antlerless deer season

Deer harvest

Decline in hunter numbers (youth)

Disposal of unclaimed deer meat – agent's actions in unclaimed meat not consistent across the state

Ducks – There are none

Education – Continuous (updating methods, etc.)

Equine Council – Please see the list that was typed by Show-Me Missouri Back Country

Horsemen

Fish Size & limits – Mark Twain Lake has 15 limit – Wyaconda at 30 limit. Why the difference when the smaller lake should have the same 15 limit (crappie)

Goose Season – Open Canada goose season later – Eastern Prairie Population Swan Lake Zone

Guide Service/Guide Requirements

Habitat – Stress better care of habitat – CRP, strips, waterways, etc.

Handfishing

Landowners cooperating and participating

Landowner Reimbursement

Mississippi River – Any plans to improve habitat on river?

Nutrient Management

Otter control/elimination

Permits – non-resident prices getting too high – getting greedy

Programs – Keep programs simple

Purchase the 1600 acre Robert's Tract in Mark Bottoms

Quail – Loss of

Quail – Did we do any good since the last forum – didn't receive any notes from last forum

Quail/Pheasant Habitat

Raccoon Season – Open earlier so youth can hunt before it's too cold. Illinois won't let them hunt until Missouri season opens. Opened on 10th of November for years.

Registration or license requirements/how government uses

Private Lands

Sales Tax – 1/8 of one percent conservation tax

Share The Harvest – Who pays?

Spring Turkey Season – Leave at ½ day

Ted Shanks – Long term plans times 2

Trespass laws

Wetlands



Southeast Regional Forum

September 22, 2003

Centenne Center

Farmington

At least twenty-eight citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Southeast Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Conservation Commission member Cynthia Metcalfe was present. Dan Witter of MDC's Outreach and Education Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Outreach and Education Division Regional Supervisor A. J. Hendershott made a short presentation about use and abuse of wildlife and natural resources in Missouri going back over 10,000 years to prehistoric times.

Rep. Dan Ward, District 107, offered welcoming remarks and mentioned a bill (which did not pass) in the last legislative session requiring the Department to pay \$250/deer in deer-automobile collisions. The bill sent a message that deer management is important and that overpopulation of deer is a well recognized problem. He expressed appreciation for MDC's responsiveness to that message and to our readiness to listen and get answers whenever he calls.

Rep. Kevin Engler, District 106, thanked MDC for putting on this forum, but said he was mainly there to listen.

Speakers were allowed approximately 3 minutes each to explain their interests and perspectives.

What MDC Heard . . . Southeast Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Audubon is concerned for birds and the general environment. Allow Audubon Society access on MDC areas and refuges generally closed to the public to conduct bird surveys.
- I'm concerned about the native flora.
- Continue re-creating habitat (shorebird, migration habitat). Help the local Audubon chapter build its sanctuary project in Engler City Park (Farmington) including trails, bird feeding and blind trail. Is a nature center possible?
- MDC should help groups better identify the most important areas to preserve.
- Described a 14-acre preserve started in 1984 on the St. Francois River, grown now to over 100 acres. The site is important because of an alarming decline in bird species, and a good location to develop a nature center. Would MDC help on that?
- Continue a strong natural history program, including the "Flora of Missouri" book project.
- The 400 plants in MDC's book "Species of Conservation Concern" are growing in number. Natural Area designation and the Natural Heritage Database are important tools, but there is more to do.
- Pride in many successful habitat protection partnerships between Ducks Unlimited and MDC. Continue strong MDC support for wetland conservation, clean air and clean water.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Southeast Region

- Promote wise use and development of good management techniques.
- Wildlife concerns are too big an element in federal programs, forcing landowners to make more habitat even where there is too much already.
- Continue landowner workshops, perhaps adding a pond workshop and pond grants. A pond workshop could be required to cost share on building a new pond just as grazing school is required for cost share on a grazing system.
- A ginseng digger expresses concern about the ethics of today's diggers. His philosophy is "take some, leave some," but he now finds long active spots where every single plant has been removed.
- A local news story reported MDC plans to purchase Rocky Ridge Ranch for 1.5 million dollars, \$3000 per acre. Why would MDC purchase such a parcel of land with a large amount of back taxes owed and spend the complete allocation of \$1.5 million for land purchases on one parcel of land?
- Too many MDC vehicles show up in use for personal business.
- Doesn't see the same old spirit in MDC employees that he saw 25 years ago.

What MDC Said . . . Southeast Region

- The public may not have received correct information about Rocky Ridge Ranch through the newspaper. There has been an offer to sell Rocky Ridge Ranch to the Department. The Regional Coordinating Team (most of whose members are in the room) is assessing whether the area would be an asset to MDC and to the public, and how it compares in priority to other acquisitions in the region. The offer has not yet been considered by the Commission, which has to approve every land purchase. Many levels of input are considered before any tract of land would be purchased.
- MDC considers all offers to sell or donate land to the Department. The Regional Coordinating Team evaluates the land offered and sends its recommendation to the central office. If the RCT assigns high priority to a particular tract, the Department's Capital Improvements Conservation Committee (CICC) reviews the recommendation in light of the budget for capital improvements. If the CICC concurs and can identify funds to pay for it, a recommendation to acquire would then be sent to the Conservation Commission for consideration. The Conservation Commission must approve every land transaction.
- Acquisition funds are limited to \$1.5 million this year, as they were last year. This year's allocation of \$1.5 million will be spent on priority inholdings, high quality tracts, unique values (e.g., partial donations), etc.

Northwest Regional Forum

September 29, 2003

Grand River Inn

Chillicothe



At least fifty-nine citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Northwest Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Conservation Commission member Lowell Mohler was present, as was former Commissioner Jeff Churan. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Harold Kerns, fisheries regional supervisor, moderated the discussion, and led off with a short presentation describing region and district boundaries used to organize MDCs staff and projects.

Rep. Jim Whorton of District 3 offered welcoming remarks and thanked participants for being there. He remarked that it's a citizen's job to educate the Legislature and a forum is one great way to do that. He compared this meeting to a trip to the doctor: the patient tells the doctor what's wrong, but not how to treat the ailment. In a like way, the public must tell MDC the problems, goals, and changes needed; then let MDC figure out the best way to get there.

What MDC Heard . . . Northwest Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- One guy plants trees, the next guy bulldozes them out. We need to plant more and help keep them in the ground.
- At last a good year for quail – they are “exploding this year.”
- Fencerows are still being bulldozed – we need to keep them.
- In this drought, pumping water from the river depletes resources that many need. Fountain Grove Conservation Area needs wells for these conditions.
- We appreciate Indian Creek Lake, but need a larger lake in the area (like Long Branch Lake).
- We need a bigger lake in the area, like Long Branch.
- Compliments on and to the new Private Lands Division. They've been helpful in both upland and bottomland farms.
- I like the new private land program, and want to know more about how it is working.
- Thanks for MDC staff in Soil and Water Conservation District office.
- Raising and harvesting warm season grasses is a good idea, but it's not easy to make the switch – don't expect too much right away.
- How can North Central Missouri College help train people for conservation work?
- Add some goose pits at Fountain Grove Conservation Area.
- Spring bird counts interfere with turkey season and create safety risks.
- What's going to happen with the Highway. 36 mitigation site southwest of Chillicothe?
- What is the status of the Topeka Shiner management plan?
- Would like to see hay and grazing as management options on Conservation Reserve Program lands.

What MDC Said . . . Northwest Region

- New large lake developments are difficult because so many things have to be right including funding, appropriate geology and landowners willing to sell. Larger lakes are largely built by the Corps of Engineers, not MDC.
- The southwest Chillicothe/Highway 36 mitigation site is managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation at present, with an MDC plan to guide them. A possible course of action is that the Missouri Department of Transportation will convey title to the mitigation site to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, which will then convey title to the city or to MDC.
- Topeka Shiners are listed as endangered by the federal government. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service drafted a recovery plan which is due out later this year. Hopefully it will, as recommended by MDC, not designate some region as “critical habitat.” We believe enough people want to protect the species that it can be recovered without such designation. Recovery depends on land use and we believe landowners who care about endangered species are likely to be helpful if they aren’t worried that finding the species on their lands might lead to restrictions.



Ozark Regional Forum

October 7, 2003
Phelps County Court House
Rolla

At least thirteen citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Ozark Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Dan Witter of MDC's Outreach and Education Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Former Director Jerry J. Presley attended. Missouri House of Representatives members Merrill Townley, District 112, and Bob May, District 149, attended and spoke, providing helpful information and wrap-up comments. Rep. Townley offered several remarks included in the legislative issues section of this report.

Rep. May provided a helpful summary after others had spoken, noting that education and communication needs were common in many discussions and that most of the issues discussed involve a spectrum of concern. He encouraged dialogue, urged the "ends" to move toward middle ground and emphasized attention to the private landowners who control the bulk of the land.

What MDC Heard . . . Ozark Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Compliments and support for the objectives Director Hoskins enunciated in his opening remarks.
- Concern for natural history programs, including endangered species protection, natural community conservation and the interagency Natural Areas Committee.
- Pride and support for a Rolla Nature Center being developed by the Audubon Society.
- Appreciation for an "open door" experience in working with MDC.
- Support for water quality conservation.
- Endangered species issues have held up important Texas County projects, first hellbenders and now Indiana bats. Landowners don't want to hear that they can't use their land within 5 miles of an Indiana bat or its habitat.
- Invasive species are a big problem. Both sericea lespedeza and multi-flora rose are examples.
- Missouri is a great state for hunting and fishing.
- Would like to see more conservation agents in the field more often.
- Place priority on preserving lands and habitats. Continue use of fire as a management tool.
- Thanks for a good job, especially White River Trace Conservation Area, a phenomenal restoration of bird habitat.
- How could MDC partner with the Rolla Nature Center project? Community has raised \$100,000 to buy 60 acres to restore to 1800s condition. We've cataloged 400 species there. We still need help to design and finance disabled accessible trails and education programs.
- Stock stripers, especially in Bull Shoals Lake.
- Desire for more enforcement efforts.

What MDC Said . . . Ozark Region

- MDC recently graduated seventeen new conservation agents, bringing the Protection Division up to full authorized strength.
- MDC has over 80 disabled accessible fishing docks around the state.
- MDC needs to manage resources in cooperation with landowners, and is committed to finding common ground with them. The biggest obstacle to finding solutions is distrust. We will try to earn that, and assure you that MDC is not out to impose hardships on landowners.

Central Regional Forum

October 16, 2003

Days Inn

Columbia



At least twenty citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Central Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Conservation Commission member Lowell Mohler was present. Tom Strother of MDC's Protection Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Each Division's regional supervisor was introduced, and provided a brief overview of activities in which their division was involved across the region.

Senator Carl Vogel, District 6, was present.

The format of this forum allowed time for give and take on issues, with many questions answered in discussions following each speaker's remarks.

What MDC Heard . . . Central Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Concerns about the chemical herbicides in USDA Conservation Reserve Program management routines – are they safe for wildlife? Safe for firefighters?
- We appreciate MDC's willingness to work with counties on roads near MDC areas. The McBaine Bridge project is a current case in point.
- In-lieu-of-tax payments to counties are locked at rates from time of acquisition. In a growth county like Boone, this imposes a hardship.
- Would like to see more shallow wetlands and more disking to setback willows on river bottom conservation areas.
- We need more handicap-accessible blinds.
- How about more wood duck boxes on Missouri River Conservation Areas? Can a discussion begin of developing duck nesting habitat in Missouri?
- A key issue is loss of wetland habitat. However, it does no good to restore if you don't maintain.
- Ducks Unlimited has a long-term commitment to more than hunting, including flood storage, water quality, aquifer recharge, and partnerships with MDC.
- Partnerships have leveraged \$1 from Ducks Unlimited into \$6 in habitat improvement.
- City appreciates cooperation and partnerships with MDC.
- City of Columbia is trying to add a new property with a lake and will want MDC help to manage the lake.
- Forestry Division cooperation on the Treekeepers Program is valuable.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Central Region

- Missouri River Communities Network (MRCN) is Stream Team #549, working on whole Missouri River to improve water quality.
- MDC help is essential to expand Missouri River recreational infrastructure – access, fuel, pumpout and docking options.
- We look forward to public use at Rocheport Cave Conservation Area. MRCN will help where it can.
- Thanks for the Conservation Commission's visit to Mexico, for Community Assistance Program projects, and Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance grants.
- Mexico wants a local MDC office and local staff to better track natural resources assets and threats. The city, recognizing partnerships as a way of life today, would help find space.
- Dog trespass: dogs track game but don't read signs or purple paint, how can we retrieve and protect them from being shot by irate landowners?
- Some local curfews on kids limit their opportunity to coon hunt.
- Missouri has made a great effort to prevent habitat degradation, but big losses still continue. For example, a 1-mile stretch of Niangua darter habitat on Moniteau Creek was destroyed, converted to a chain of reservoirs.
- Continue endangered species work. Many (e.g., pink planaria) need better monitoring to see if we are gaining or losing ground. The pendulum swings between research and monitoring. It is valuable to know where you are headed.
- Exotic species are a big problem, notably rusty crayfish and non-native fishes.
- Reconsider pond stocking policies: "catfish in every pond" often means overflow introduction that hurts native stream populations.

What MDC Said . . . Central Region

- MDC has employees in every county, but public contact offices are sparsely distributed.
- Missouri is a strong property rights state: trespass laws put power into the landowner's and prosecuting attorney's hands. The key to continued hunting, trapping, and dog running is good human relationships built long before the hunt. After the deer is shot or when the dog strays at 2 a.m. is not a good time to start a discussion with a landowner.
- There are lots of wetlands to manage, and input at the area manager level is the key. Some land needs to be kept open, other land to naturally revegetate. We don't always have free hand in management. Areas like Overton are managed for the Corps of Engineers, and acquisitions like Marion Bottoms come with Wetland Reserve Program easements.



Saint Louis Regional Forum

October 20, 2003

East Central Community College
Union

At least thirty-one citizens participated, as did Department staff from the St. Louis Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Eric Kurzejeski of MDC's Resource Science Division moderated the meeting. Deputy Director John Smith made welcoming and closing remarks on behalf of Director Hoskins. Conservation Commissioner Cynthia Metcalfe was in attendance.

State Rep. Jack Jackson of District 89 was present, and Rep. Jane Cunningham of District 86 was represented by Brian Copple and Darcy Capstick.

What MDC Heard . . . St. Louis Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Concern that landfills are filling up and about toxic waste going to landfills. We need state incentives for recycling.
- Prevent loss of native habitats and restore them. Concern for wetlands. We have a delicate ecosystem and need to restore it.
- Air quality is an especially big problem in St. Louis and we need to get the public, manufacturers and legislators better informed.
- The value of diverse ecosystems to people is tremendous, and the value of services provided by them is beyond the world's gross national product. Protect and restore ecosystems, recycle, and get toxic materials out of them. Keep up projects like Grow Native!, and be role models. Find ways to popularize information so more people will understand the issues.
- Compliments on Forest 44 and Columbia Bottom Conservation Areas. I'm glad MDC bought the land, otherwise it would have been developed.
- Too many people: put zero population growth on your web page.
- Compliments on programs and partnerships to breed endangered species, especially mussels.
- Stream Team is a model for other states. More funds should be put into this program not less. How can you care for the fish, forest and wildlife without providing funds for their habitats?
- MDC has been through good times and bad, but Director Hoskins is listening and moving in the right direction.
- The agency should not forget the private citizen.
- It was the inner city and the black people who provided the margins to carry the 1/8 of one percent sales tax into being. Unfortunately, for 20 years they have been forgotten.
- There are fewer consumptive users in the state, but more people enjoying the outdoors in non-consumptive ways.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . St. Louis Region

- Encourage more bike paths for all types of bikes on MDC areas. One can get really close to habitat on a bike. Thirty years ago mountain bikes didn't exist. In many ways, deer see bikers like equestrians, watching before running away, giving an enjoyable human/wildlife interaction.
- Groups like Trailnet are eager to work with MDC to make use of local areas.
- For 38 years volunteers have been cleaning up the Meramec River. We want to send a message to "keep our rivers clean."
- Thanks for MDC support given to the offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. MDC works well with private landowners and with educational concerns. We encourage implementation of things that come out of this forum.
- Improve the directions to Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center – at least light the MDC sign.

What MDC Said . . . St. Louis Region

- We put a good deal of emphasis on endangered species. We have a Wildlife Diversity Section that focuses on the distribution and abundance of species.
- MDC is strongly committed to the streams of Missouri and the Stream Team program. While spending focuses change, we have no overall reduction in the Stream Team Program, and continue to maintain staff dedicated to it

Southwest Regional Forum
October 23, 2003
Missouri Southern State University
Joplin



At least twenty-eight citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Southwest Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Bob Schroepel of MDC's Private Land Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Citizens spoke to explain their interests and perspectives, including Missouri House of Representatives members Ron Richard, District 129, and Kevin Wilson, District 130. Rep. Richard opened with a few comments about water quality, the need for another water reservoir in the area, and request for help with permitting processes. Rep. Kevin Wilson welcomed the forum, saying he was here mainly to listen.

Roger Still spoke for the State Audubon Society, providing an update on the Nature Center project in Joplin. With \$500,000 from the city, \$2,000,000 from MDC, and \$300,000 from other sources, the project is well on the way to a \$5.4 million goal. The center is to be regional in scope, providing an environmental education hub throughout southwest Missouri. It is to have 12,000 square feet indoors, plus a trail system and multiple habitat restorations. The latter have already started. A capital campaign is in progress, and doors should open within 2-3 years.

MDC's Duane Parker reviewed plans for a shooting range proposed for construction on the west side of Crowder Conservation Area. The site search began in the early 1980s, a suitable site and conceptual plan are in hand, and the proposal will be considered in the upcoming budget process.

MDC's Tim Russell spoke about plans for monitoring harvested deer for chronic wasting disease again this year. Two hundred deer will be tested in Barry and in Newton county. This year's testing will require removal of only a lymph node from the lower jaw, not the whole head as taken last year.

MDC's Mark Hutchings talked about new efforts to stock wild turkey in Newton and McDonald counties. The original stockings (back several decades) did not take. In 2001, working with the National Wild Turkey Federation, 360 more birds were introduced, many of them banded and radio outfitted for extensive research. Results are not clear yet, but are encouraging so far.

What MDC Heard . . . Southwest Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Water quality and quality water are important: this area needs another water reservoir and would appreciate MDC help in project permitting processes.
- Restocking of wild elk had been a big concern for cattlemen. The Missouri Cattlemen's Association is glad plans to do so were put on the shelf.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Southwest Region

- We need good fishing piers for Kellogg Lake and help deciding what to do with the dam. Thanks for the use of MDCs mobile aquarium at a recent event. We hope to get it back soon.
- Could some small lakes be managed for catch-and-release bass at Shawnee Trails and Bushwhacker Conservation Areas? Could escapee walleye in Shoal Creek be supplemented by restocking every few years?
- The Jasper/Newton County area sometimes feels a little left out and they'd really like to see a shooting range nearby. Kansas just lured an international sporting clay competition, and a range might put this area in position to compete. There are no Jasper County hunting areas, and they would like to see MDC acquire something.
- Neosho appreciates the new fishing area in the downtown park.
- A local tree service company refers people to MDC daily for advice and answers. Customers tend to trust MDC advice about what to do, and let services concentrate on getting the needed work done. Some don't know to ask MDC, so do more to publicize the phone number.
- Hunters must develop a better image. Whenever on the stand, dressed in camo, going to and from the field be on your best behavior and project an image that's positive for hunting.
- Turkey hunting may be the only hunting sport that is still growing. Missouri has about 10% of the national turkey flock.
- When will the range be built? Regional growth is a good reason to push ahead quickly. Staffing the range was encouraged to minimize vandalism and increase service.
- We are concerned that dam repairs be made at Shawnee Trail Conservation Area and about check in procedures for dove hunters. Is a similar check in for waterfowl in the works? Speaker encourages a new shooting sports program, especially in conjunction with the range, and is working on a fishing program for kids as well.
- Relations with MDC are good. Four Rivers Conservation Area is a fantastic development, but further wetland development is still important. Such areas have broad benefits, not just to waterfowl hunters.
- A botanist notes that plants are the base of all wildlife and habitat. Work to get more native plants before the public in landscaping projects. On areas like the Missouri Southern State University campus, mow less and protect areas like their Biology Pond and adjacent prairie.
- Use Eagle Scouts to restore trails like the campus' biology trail.
- A teacher at a school with an international mission wishes for more visible things that say to others how much we care about the environment. She has high hopes that the nature center will meet this need.
- County road crews with bush hogs need to do a better job by not damaging trees so badly.
- Support for the nature center project and thanks to MDC for its wide range of help. Volunteering at the Springfield Nature Center has made education into a passion. Speaker looks forward to a similar opportunity for Joplin area people.
- Spoke in support of the shooting range, and remarked about the value of youth hunts for deer.

What MDC Said . . . Southwest Region

- These are tough budget times and the fact that 80 percent of MDCs budget is operational leaves a small capital improvements budget. The new range is a high priority if enough funds are available next fiscal year, but continued tight times may mean delay.
- Missouri is #1 in the nation in turkey harvest. Turkey seasons contribute over \$33 million to the state economy and attract thousands of out-of-state hunters.
- National Wild Turkey Federation superfund grants have been valuable. The organization is in part responsible for Missouri's leadership in turkey management.
- At Shawnee Trail Conservation Area, the dam is being repaired and no waterfowl check in is contemplated.



Kansas City Regional Forum

October 30, 2003
Village Pavilion
Clinton

At least twenty-nine citizens participated, as did Department staff from the Kansas City Region leadership team and the Jefferson City central office. Conservation Commissioners Cynthia Metcalfe and Lowell Mohler were in attendance. Edd Brown of MDC's Private Land Service Division moderated the meeting. Director John Hoskins made welcoming and closing remarks.

Most participants spoke to explain their interests and perspectives, including Missouri House of Representatives members Tom Self of District 116; Jerry King of District 125; and Shannon Cooper of District 120.

The moderator made a brief presentation describing the Kansas City Region (home to 1.2 million people), some history of MDC and information on the economic benefits of conservation.

There was time to discuss all issues as raised, with a comfortable discussion and exchange among all participants.

What MDC Heard . . . Kansas City Region

Note: Comments cited in Common Threads sections are not duplicated here. Also not listed are many remarks of thanks for the forum, receptivity to input, and the presence of top level staff.

- Waterfowl refuges are holding too many birds during the hunting season and have changed migration patterns. Arkansas allows youth hunting on refuges, which helps move ducks in a more normal pattern; making them more accessible to hunters.
- Need better training for some of the staff selling permits for MDC vendors.
- In 2004-05, Missouri will host the national 4-H shooting sports competition in Columbia.
- Thanks for help getting The Wildlife Society Chapter started at Central Missouri State University, and for support of a recent "Bioblitz" held on or near campus.
- Thanks for support of a student's interest in protection issues and conservation career opportunities.
- Thanks for support of campus programs. Please provide additional staff as seminar speakers in the future.
- Thanks for support of local Native Plant Society Chapter (providing speakers) and for managing all the public land for the use and benefit of the public.
- Concern over the increasing invasion of exotic honeysuckle and euonymus species on some management areas.
- More early successional management work is needed on MDC-managed lands, including accelerated efforts to setback woody plant succession and address invasive exotic plant species (esp. sericea lespedeza, crown vetch and birdsfoot trefoil). Public lands should not be refuges for exotic plant species which can spread to neighboring private land.
- Remove obstacles from field managers where possible and implement policy that gives field managers increased decision making.

Continuation: What MDC Heard . . . Kansas City Region

- Ducks Unlimited (DU) and MDC have enjoyed a great and productive relationship. Since 1985 DU has provided \$7.6 million for wetland habitat, including \$1.6 million dedicated to Four Rivers Conservation Area through Busch family fundraising efforts. Comments were supportive and appreciative of Department efforts on behalf of wetlands and waterfowl resources.
- Need more mowing at the James A. Reed Memorial Conservation Area in support of field trial efforts, but also to address woody encroachment more aggressively.
- Planting more food plots to attract and hold birds.
- Missouri Cattlemen's Association members appreciate dollars available to landowners through agriculture and conservation programs.

What MDC Said . . . Kansas City Region

- A recent meeting with the new state director of the Cattlemen's Association offers encouragement that good relations lie ahead. Prominent concern is more effort to manage invasive species on Department areas.
- MDC shooting sports priority in the short-term is to upgrade existing facilities. It is eager to identify new potential sites and partnerships for possible future developments.

Attendance Lists

Following are lists of people who our records indicate attended one of the 2003 Fall Conservation Forums, names and the organizations they often represented. These are compiled from handwritten lists of registrants at the door, and may also include some names heard that were not listed. Spellings may thus be incorrect, and we apologize for such errors in advance.

Copies of this summary document will be sent to those who attended and for whom a complete address was recorded as well as those who received invitations in advance. It will be available at the MDC website, www.mdc.mo.gov.

Northeast Region

Berkley Barton, Missouri Christmas Tree Association
Izelle Burns, Tree Farmer
Alice Dye, Stream Team #2115
Denny Foss, Missouri Waterfowl Association
Dan Hatton, NEMO Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
Bruce Loewenberg, Tree Farmer
Lynn Lyda, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen
Allie Lymenstull, Mississippi Valley Hunters & Fishermen
Rick Merritt, Malinmor Hunt Club
Brian Munzlinger, State Representative, 1st District
Jerry Northcutt, Pike Area Quail Unlimited
Bob Riley, Mark Twain Area Quail Unlimited
Wes Shoemyer, State Representative, 9th District
Stephen St. Clair, Northeast Missouri Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
Mark White, Environmental Resources Coalition Missouri Corn Growers Association
Edward Woods, Missouri Association of Meat Processors
Kevin Pollitt, Marion County Ducks Unlimited
Bill Fisher, Whitetail Deer Breeder
Rodney Smith, Ducks Unlimited
Jim Gorrell

Southeast Region

John England, Farmington Middle School/Stream Team Leader
Bill Reeves, East Ozarks Audubon Society
Bob Lewis, East Ozarks Audubon Society
Paul Gaines, Madison County Wood Products, Inc.
Doug Gaines, Madison County Wood Products, Inc.
Risha Gaines, Madison County Wood Products, Inc.
Jack Harris, Missouri Native Plant Society
Kevin Willsey, Ducks Unlimited
Tom and Linda Ziegler, Southeast Missouri Forage and Grassland Council
Mike Naeger, Naeger Forest Products, Inc.
Tim Naeger, Naeger Forest Products, Inc.

Jim Naeger, Naeger Forest Products, Inc.
Marvin Breitenfeld, Reynolds County Soil and Water District
Helen Breitenfeld, Reynolds County Soil and Water District
Doug Smith, Farmington Press
Todd Garner, East Perry Timber Procurement Co.
Todd Petzoldt, East Perry Timber Procurement Co.
Arlon Held, Missouri Trappers Association
Wayne Cook, Missouri Trappers Association
Harry Robbins, Madison Soil and Water District
Bruce Griffon, Madison Soil and Water District
Randal Swink, National Wild Turkey Federation
Sharon Holdman, Farmington School District
Randy Holdman, Farmington School District
Dan Ward, State Representative, 107th District
Kevin Engler, State Representative, 106th District
Dr. Robert Dettmer, President of National Wild Turkey Federation
Vernon Bruckerhoff, citizen and friend of conservation

Northwest Region

Ron Eckers
Randy Rosse
John Weber
Charlie Leibold
Ellen Leibold
Pat McCoy
Nathan Woodland, 102 River Wildlife Club
Solomon Ropp
Barb Burton, Chamber of Commerce
Sheriff Ken Heldenbrand
Jim Whorton, State Representative, 3rd District
Tom Burch, North Central National Wild Turkey Federation
Joe Moser, Trappers Association
Troy Frakes, Carrollton Fire Department
Steve Kinder, Grand River Audubon Society
Lonnie Toot
Nancy Elliott, Chillicothe Middle School & Stream Team Quail Project
Doug Long, Green Hills Trail Association
Bob Plummer
Mark Shockey
Eva Danner, Livingston County
Jon Martin, Livingston County
Lloyd Grafton, Linn County
Jeff Churan
Jeff Cox
David Nowland, North Central Missouri College, Trenton
Bill Koehler
Bill Wehrle, Constitution Tribune newspaper
Gary Webb, Noodlers Anonymous

Dick Snyder
Tim Riekema, Green Hills Trail Association
Roxanna Walters Vaughn Walters, Pintail Marsh
Jim Drew, Tree Farmers
Eric Turne, Weekly News
John Hill, North Central Carroll Fire Protection District
Trenni Lightfoot, North Central Carroll Fire Protection District
Greg Flick, North Central Carroll Fire Protection District
Brian Eggers
Damien Dixon, Northwest Landowners Council
John Bugg, Northwest Landowners Council
Kenneth Wood, Stet Fire Department
Artie Horn, Stet Fire Department
Steve Radcliff, Livingston Soil & Water
Dennis Steigerwalt, Stream Team High School - Gallatin
Sharon Steigerwalt, Stream Team High School - Gallatin
Lee Wilbeck, Brookfield R-III
Darrin Fravel, Wheeling Rural Fire District
John Lee
Gene Carlton, Grand River Audubon
Myrna Carlton, Grand River Audubon
Frank St. Clair, Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Dan Files, Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Kenny Roberts, Grundy County Commission/Grundy County Rural Fire
Randy Rasche, Ducks Unlimited
Tim Reger, Grand River Ducks Unlimited
Greg Gaines, Missouri Farm Bureau
Cary Grant
Steve Shoot
Leslie Holloway, Missouri Farm Bureau

Ozark Region

Richard Forrest, Missouri Meat Processors Association
Joe Whetstine, Texas County Commissioner
Ed Turner, Missouri Trapper's Association
Ted Heisel, Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Jerry J. Presley, MFPA
Lanie Frick - Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen
Kurt Homeyer, The Nature Conservancy
Lynda Richards, Missouri Native Plant Society
Bob Temper, Ozark Fly Fishers
Bob May, State Representative, 149th District
Merrill Townley, State Representative, 112th District
Ricky Dull, Big Piney Ducks Unlimited
Mike Doyen - Ozark River's Audubon

Central Region

John Fordham, Cooper County Fire Protection District
Larry Oerly, Cooper County Fire Protection District
Keith Schnarre, Boone County CommissionEldon Kreisel, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen
Scott Bell, Missouri Waterfowlers Association
Tom Shyrock, Ducks Unlimited of Columbia
Jim Talbert, Ducks Unlimited
Bill Watkins, Columbia City Manager's Office
Steve Johnson, Missouri River Communities Network
Charlie Callaway, Missouri Trappers Association
Chad Schumaker, Mexico Parks and Recreation
Bill Frazier, Central Missouri Urban Forestry Council
Russell Greenlaw, Mid-Missouri Coonhunters Association
Doug Nolte, University of Missouri Fisheries and Wildlife Science
Earl Buck, Missouri Trappers Association
Dave Murphy, Missouri Conservation Federation
Ken Canada, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Dale Miller, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Carl Vogel, State Senator 6th District
Steve Hobbs, State Representative 121st District
Kelly Schultz represented Robert Harris, State Representative 23rd

St. Louis Region

Gerry Boehm, Greenway Network Inc
William Boever, St. Louis Zoo
Darcy & Lincoln Capstick, for Jane Cunningham, State Representative, 86th District
Ron Coleman, Open Space Council
Willis Corbett, Missouri Horseback Field Trial Assoc.
Corey Cottrell, Resort
Ray Cunio, Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District
Ted Curtis, Trailnet Inc
Don Fink, Department of Natural Resources – Route 66 State Park
Steve Fleming, Eastern Missouri Pheasants Forever
Ron Giesler, St. Louis Science Center
Skip Hajek, Green's Canoe Rental & Campground
Matthew Herring, University Outreach & Extension – Franklin County
Ed Hillhouse, Presiding Commissioner Franklin County
Ray Hudak, Natural Resources Conservation Service for St. Louis & St. Charles Counties
Shawn Keller, St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District
Oliver Krechel, Spirit of St. Louis Labrador Retriever Club
Chris Merritt, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District
Debbie Niederer, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District
Ervin Schaedler, St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District
David Schilling, Tyson Research Center
Vicki Schneider, State Representative, 117th District
Derrick Standley, for Jane Cunningham, State Representative, 86th District

Sarah Szachnieski, Warren County Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tammy Teeter, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Warren and Montgomery Counties
Ann Whitehead, Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District
Patty Wiggins, City of Town & Country
Terry Wilson, Associate Commissioner Franklin County
Sheria Yancey, Farm Service Agency, Franklin County
Ron Ziehm, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Franklin, Washington & Jefferson Counties
Kyle Larimore, Quality Deer Management Association

Southwest Region

Dorothy Bay, Missouri Southern State University
Toby Bottom, Webb City School District
Chris Briley, Joplin Ducks Unlimited
Alan Bull, Carthage Parks and Recreation
Doug Burch, Neosho Ducks Unlimited
Trisha Burgi, Kellogg Lake Board
Darrel Burkhart
Charles Burwick, Audubon Missouri
Bill Collie, Conservation Federation
Norma Crews
Clair Goodwin, Joplin Globe
Ed Grundy, Kellogg Lake/Spring River Development
John Heitz, White Oak Bowhunters
Greg Hickman, Neosho Fire Department
Steven Jahay, White Oak Bowhunters
Larry Moore, The Cattlemen's Association
Larry Neal, National Wild Turkey Federation
Michael Peterman, 4-Hoofs 4-H Club
Ron Richard, State Representative, 129th District
Don Scott, Scott's Taxidermy
Lois Scott, Scott's Taxidermy
Mike Shade, Botany Shop
Bob Sheldon, Old Cabin Shop
Ed Sneed
Roger Still, Audubon Missouri
Greg Wilkerson, Affordable Tree Service
Mike Wilkerson, Affordable Tree Service
Kevin Wilson, State Representative. 130th District
Kansas City Region
Mark Albright, State Fair Community College
John Bailey
Shannon Cooper, State Representative, 120th District
Carolyn Dieckman, Benton County Cattlemen's Association
Marvin Dieckman, Benton County Cattlemen's Association
Kelly Eaton, Henry Elementary School
Johnny Everhart, Missouri Outback
Linda Everhart, Missouri Outback

Kelly Geyer
Michael Geyer
Sarah Gill, Central Missouri State University Student Chapter of Wildlife Society
Lloyd Graften, Missouri Walnut Council
Alex Hodges, Truman Lake Quail Unlimited
Jeff Hodges, Quail Unlimited
Vicki Jackson, Central Missouri State University Student Chapter of Wildlife Society
Jerry King, State Representative, 125th District
David Lindel, Missouri Native Plant Society
Fred Linn, Weimaraner Club of Greater Kansas City
Laura Pasienuk, Central Missouri State University Student Chapter of Wildlife Society
Lea Rae Porta, Henry Elementary School
Ed Powell, Public (Radio)
Don Ross, Public (former MDC)
Dennis Rowland, 4-H Shooting Sports
David Rutledge, 4-H Shooting Sports
Tom Self, State Representative, District 116
Jim Sutton, Missouri Outback
Julias Wall, Ducks Unlimited
Earl Williams, Missouri Native Plant Society

Next Steps

The Missouri Department of Conservation places a high value on public input. We have found the Conservation Forums to be an excellent tool for gathering input, and for developing better relations with supporters, critics and others who are interested in Missouri's resources. We plan another round of Conservation Forums in the fall of 2004.

In addition to these forums, we gather information in a variety of ways, including public opinion surveys, public use questionnaires, daily phone and mail input to field staff and offices, listening to legislators' concerns, and attending or sponsoring other public meetings.

If at any time you have an issue or concern, please contact any of our staff or offices.

TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED,
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR TIME, IDEAS AND
CANDOR!